I-Innovate introduces AI to under-served school communities in Cape Town

STE(A)M educational specialist I-Innovate has partnered with US developers Curiosity Machine and local organisation Sakhikamva Foundation, to bring the AI Family Challenge concept to South Africa with aim of ultimately reaching 20,000 learners in disadvantaged areas around the world. Learners, teachers and family members get together to explore fascinating facets of AI technologies such as machine learning, speech recognition, prediction models, autonomous vehicles, virtual reality and neural networks.

This month, grade three to seven learners from Heideveld Primary School and their families can step into the astounding world of artificial intelligence (AI) when they join the free three-day initiative.

Sharing vital digital age skills

The AI Family Challenge curriculum is experiential and hands-on so that vital digital age skills such as computational thinking, electrical engineering, mobile computing and robotics can be developed in a fun, interactive learning environment. As learners understand and apply AI concepts, they are inspired to use them to find solutions to pressing community problems when it comes to food, agriculture, health, transportation and energy. The 'learn by doing' approach to mastering the series of design challenges presented by I-Innovate and Curiosity Machine are aimed at igniting creativity, problem-solving, collaboration and innovation. The learning experience fosters a strong and valuable sense of empowerment, confidence and inclusion in the learners.

New way of learning

"With these hands-on design challenges, we make complex AI concepts accessible to children and their families," says I-Innovate CEO, Trisha Crookes. "Learners create their first robots while learning the building blocks of computer science and artificial intelligence. Parents and teachers have been inspired by this new way of learning and can see a new level excitement for learning in their children. More importantly, over the course of the challenge, participants develop a learner mindset that gives them a lifelong ability to innovate and problem solve."

Having previously connected Cape Town schools to the International Space Station through the ExoLab programme, I-Innovate continues to work with partners to bring global thinking and digital age experiential learning to South African learners. "The AI Family Challenge is another inspiring and highly relevant way of showing children in underserved communities that they can make giant leaps," concludes Crookes.

This initial three-day phase of the AI Family Challenge in Cape Town will be followed by additional events over the next six months. For more information, go to www.i-can-innovate.com.